

Treasurer Josh Mandel Announces Launch of Stark County Local Government Checkbooks on OhioCheckbook.com

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 360 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

CANTON – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel stood today with Stark County local government officials and announced the launch of Stark County, the City of North Canton, the City of Massillon, Paris Township and Plain Township checkbooks on OhioCheckbook.com. Last year, Treasurer Mandel launched OhioCheckbook.com, which sets a new national standard for government transparency and for the first time in Ohio history puts all state spending information on the internet. OhioCheckbook.com recently earned Ohio the number one ranking in the country for government transparency.

Treasurer Mandel was joined at today's announcement by Stark County Auditor Alan Harold, Stark County Commissioner Richard Regula and Stark County Treasurer Alexander Zumbar. Also joining Treasurer Mandel at today's announcement were North Canton Mayor David Held, Finance Director Karen Alger and Finance Chair Dan Griffith, Massillon Chief Deputy Auditor Debbie Bonk and Treasurer Maude Slagle, Plain Township Fiscal Officer Anthony Flex and Plain Township Trustee John Sabo.

The following is a breakdown of today's local government checkbook sites:

- Stark County's checkbook includes over 243,000 transactions that equal to more than \$497.2 million of total spending over the past three fiscal years.
- North Canton's checkbook includes over 92,000 transactions that equal to more than \$48 million of total spending over the past two fiscal years.
- Massillon's checkbook includes over 62,000 transactions that equal to more than \$230 million of total spending over the past six fiscal years.
- Paris Township's checkbook includes over 2,000 transactions that equal to more than \$1.7 million of total spending over the past three fiscal years.
- Plain Township's checkbook includes over 38,000 transactions that equal to more than \$35.7 million of total spending over the past three fiscal years.
- Combined, today's announcement allows taxpayers in Stark County to view over 439,000 individual transactions representing more than \$813.5 million of total spending.

"I believe the people of Stark County have a right to know how their tax money is being spent and I applaud local leaders here for partnering with the Treasurer's office to post their finances on OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Mandel. "By partnering and posting local government checkbooks, taxpayers across Ohio are empowered with a powerful tool to hold public officials accountable within their communities."

"Stark County Government is excited to partner with the State Treasurer Mandel on the Ohio Checkbook program," said Stark County Auditor Alan Harold. "There is no barrier that should not be overcome to make government more accessible and transparent. OhioCheckbook.com is a powerful tool that opens our county's financial records for all to see and to encourage our citizens to inquire upon and explore the workings of their government."

“This is an excellent service to our residents as we bring greater openness and accountability to the City spending and our finances,” said North Canton Mayor David Held.

“We are excited to partner with Treasurer Mandel and take one more step toward transparency in the City of North Canton,” said North Canton Finance Director Karen Alger. “Taxpayers will be able to go online look up a specific department, vendor, or any expense they want to understand where the money is being spent. We have nothing to hide.”

“The Auditor and I are pleased to participate in OhioCheckbook.com and are looking forward to having this service available for our citizens,” said Massillon Treasurer Maude Slagle.

“It is great that the Ohio taxpayers will have the ability to access financial information concerning their local governments online through OhioCheckbook.com,” said Paris Township Fiscal Officer Rudy Evanich.

“As President of the Plain Township Board of Trustees, I found the OhioCheckbook.com initiative to be a critical and vital tool for our residents’ transparency to their business,” said Plain Township Board of Trustees President Scott Haws. “As a leader in Stark County local government, I am a huge advocate and firm believer of transparency at all levels”

“I’d like to thank Treasurer Mandel for making OhioCheckbook.com available to Stark County and especially Plain Township,” said Plain Township Fiscal Officer Anthony Flex. “OhioCheckbook.com provides a great resource for all residents of Plain Township to easily see where the Trustees are spending their tax dollars.”

On April 7th, Treasurer Mandel sent a letter to 18,062 local government and school officials representing 3,962 local governments throughout the state calling on them to place their checkbook level data on OhioCheckbook.com and extending an invitation to partner with his office at no cost to local governments. These local governments include cities, counties, townships, schools, library districts and other special districts.

A large coalition of statewide and local government organizations have expressed support for OhioCheckbook.com and local government transparency, including:

- Ohio Municipal League
- Ohio Township Association
- Ohio Association of School Business Officials
- Buckeye Association of School Administrators
- County Commissioner Association of Ohio
- County Auditor Association of Ohio
- Ohio Newspaper Association
- Ohio Society of CPAs
- Buckeye Institute
- Common Cause Ohio

OhioCheckbook.com was launched on December 2, 2014, marking the first time in Ohio history when citizens could actually see every expenditure in state government. Since its launch, OhioCheckbook.com has received overwhelming support from newspapers and groups across the state and, as of November 20, 2015 there have been more than 389,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$490 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 134 million transactions. The website includes cutting-edge features such as:

- “Google-style” contextual search capabilities, to allow users to sort by keyword, department, category or vendor;
- Fully dynamic interactive charts to drill down on state spending;
- Functionality to compare state spending year-over-year or among agencies; and,
- Capability to share charts or checks with social media networks, and direct contact for agency fiscal offices.

In March, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG) released their annual “[Following the Money 2015](#)” report and Treasurer Mandel earned Ohio the number one transparency ranking in the country for providing online access to government spending data. Ohio was prominently featured in the report after climbing from 46th to 1st in spending transparency as a result of Treasurer Mandel’s release of OhioCheckbook.com. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio received a perfect score of 100 points this year – the highest score in the history of the U.S. PIRG transparency rankings.

The Treasurer’s office is partnering with OpenGov, a leading Silicon Valley government technology company, to provide residents of Ohio the ability to view and search local government expenditures in a user-friendly, digital format. “Ohio is setting the standard for financial transparency on an unprecedented scale. We are excited to partner with the Treasurer’s office to bring world-class technology to communities large and small across the state,” said Zachary Bookman, CEO of OpenGov.

For more information or to view your local government website, visit the Local Government option on OhioCheckbook.com or click on;

- StarkCounty.OhioCheckbook.com;
- NorthCanton.OhioCheckbook.com;
- Massillon.OhioCheckbook.com;
- ParisTownshipStark.OhioCheckbook.com;
- PlainTownshipStark.OhioCheckbook.com.

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